



Baseline survey for an ongoing topline assessment of the Global Community Liaison Office (GCLO) programs, resources, services, and outreach and to identify emerging Foreign Service issues.

GCLO

Levels of familiarity with GCLO and usage of their offerings correlate to more positive impressions of GCLO; the GCLO reputation suffers among those casually familiar and unfamiliar with GCLO offerings.

Foreign Service Life

Bidding factors provide insight into different priorities of Foreign Service household-types. Sizable minority of the community struggle with work-life balance.

This fall, we interviewed nearly 3,300 members of the U.S. Government's Foreign Service community (Community). We engaged with a representative cross-section of direct hire and adult family members across all 50 agencies in domestic assignment and under Chiefs of Mission at foreign posts. Starr Opinion Research developed the methodology for the survey design and administration, which was reviewed by GTM/OTA, and programmed the survey. Star Opinion conducted the analysis independently. A full description of the methodology is available; email GCLAskSurvey@state.gov.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
REPORT KEY FINDINGS.....	7
GCLO	7
FAMILIARITY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE METRICS OF GCLO	7
GCLO MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMS, SERVICES, RESOURCES AND OUTREACH.....	9
INTERACTIONS WITH GCLO	10
BIDDING FACTORS	10
VOLUNTARY SEPARATION	12
PROGRAMS, SERVICES, RESOURCES AND OUTREACH	13
EDUCATION & YOUTH.....	13
UNACCOMPANIED TOURS (UT)	15
CLO AT POST	17
COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH	18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Methodology: GCLO collected 3,300 anonymous online surveys between November 15 and November 30, 2021, of a representative sample of the U.S. Government's [Foreign Service Community](#). To ensure only members of the U.S. Government's Foreign Service Community participated in the survey, the survey was distributed directly to employees and family members serving under Chief of Mission overseas and to employees and family members serving in the U.S. through the Foreign Service interagency communication channels.

GCLO

GCLO rates favorably among people who are very familiar or have used their programs, services and resources, but too few people are aware of GCLO and what it does.

- **Key Metrics:** The overall assessment of GCLO – likelihood to recommend GCLO to a friend or colleague- correlates to level of familiarity and experience with GCLO programs, services, and resources. Only Community Members who are very familiar with GCLO are more likely to recommend the office to friends or colleagues. Currently, only half of the Community are very or somewhat familiar with GCLO.
- **Office Name Change:** After nearly 40 years as the Family Liaison Office (FLO), in the spring of 2021, the office changed its name to the Global Community Liaison Office (GCLO). The open-ended responses show that the name change may have played a role in the Community's lack of familiarity with GCLO.
- The survey identified the following segments of the community that are less likely to be familiar with GCLO:
 - Direct hires from non-State Department agencies serving at large posts with fewer than three overseas diplomatic postings and in non-supervisory positions.
 - Direct hires from the State Department serving on their first diplomatic tour.
 - Singles and couples with no children in the household and fewer than three overseas diplomatic postings.
- **Priority Areas:** From the three identified segments of the community identified above as less likely to be familiar with GCLO, the office has established an outreach strategy. GCLO will focus on increasing awareness of GCLO programs, advocacy, and services through the increased communication with interagency partners, additional briefings, and expanded social media outreach which includes a new digital media production project.

FOREIGN SERVICE LIFE

GCLO asked about perceptions of Foreign Service life, [defined as](#) U.S. government direct-hire employees and their family members, from all agencies under Chief of Mission authority serving overseas and returning to the United States. These perceptions likely relate to the types of programs and services GCLO offers the Community.

- **The strongest held opinions among the Community are:**
 - A strong sense of self-reliance in solving challenges while living overseas (81 percent agree with this belief). More than two in three (69 percent) agree information can empower them to solve problems.
 - Very few have strong inclinations to separate from Foreign Service lifestyle, based on their experience of life outside of the workplace (four percent of direct hires and five percent of family members reported they would consider separating).
- **The weaker opinions are:**
 - Half do not “know they can go to a GCLO resource when I have a question about foreign service life.”
 - One in three does not agree the information they need to navigate Foreign Service life is already available.

PROGRAMS, SERVICES, RESOURCES, AND OUTREACH

GCLO provides numerous [programs, services, and resources](#). For this survey, the following programs and resources were reviewed. In the GCLO Spring Listening Survey of 2022, other programs and services will be reviewed.

Education & Youth

- **Usage:** In the past year, 11 percent of the Community have used the GCLO [education and youth](#) programs and services, and 25 percent have used them at one point.
 - Seven in ten feel well-informed of educational options.
 - Seven in ten are satisfied with the information available on educational opportunities.
- **Priority areas:** No individual youth education area emerges needing greater focus from GCLO. The youth educational needs of the Community are fragmented across different needs for different ages of children and different learning environments. GCLO will focus on providing more personal service via direct client follow-up and live events to connect with the fragmented groups within the Community.

Unaccompanied *Tours (UT)*

- **Usage:** In the past year, three percent of the respondents have used the GCLO [unaccompanied tours](#) programs and services, and 14 percent have used it at some point.
- **Priority areas:** There is not one area that users rated higher than others; however, GCLO will be focusing on raising awareness of UT support services and the requirement to opt-in to directly receive information.

CLO at Post

- **Usage:** In the past year, 78 percent of the Community have utilized CLO at Post, and 91 percent have used it at one point.
- **Priority areas:** The Community rated most areas of CLO responsibility as important, and with a satisfactory performance. From open-ended responses, opportunities to improve included the onboarding process and CLO inclusiveness at post. GCLO will focus on enhancing CLO training with updated best practices and further defining the CLO role in fostering and supporting a diverse and inclusive community.

Communications & Outreach

- **Usage:** The Foreign Service community access GCLO information through various GCLO communications channels including GCLO Weekly, GCLO's Facebook page, the GCLO website, and information from the CLOs at post.
- **Priority areas:** For information about Foreign Service life, two in three like to receive this through email (64 percent), though few (8 percent) listed this as their only preferred source. For information at post, nine in ten preferred email (89 percent), with sizable minorities also preferring WhatsApp, Facebook and websites. GCLO will focus on building greater awareness of GCLO programs and services through email campaigns, the GCLO Facebook page, and increasing usability of the GCLO website.

REPORT KEY FINDINGS

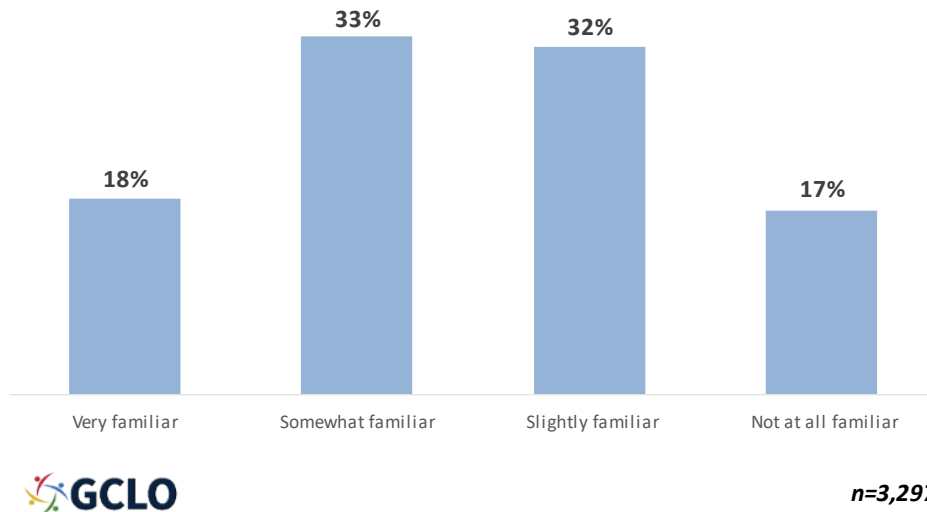
GCLO

FAMILIARITY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE METRICS OF GCLO

Familiarity. Among the U.S. Foreign Service Community, half (51 percent) are *very* or *somewhat* familiar with GCLO, and 49% are *slightly familiar* or *not at all familiar*.

GCLO Familiarity

Q: How familiar are you with GCLO, the Global Community Liaison Office, formerly known as FLO, the Family Liaison Office, based in Washington, DC?
Important - Please note that GCLO is related to, but different from the CLO that is located at posts.



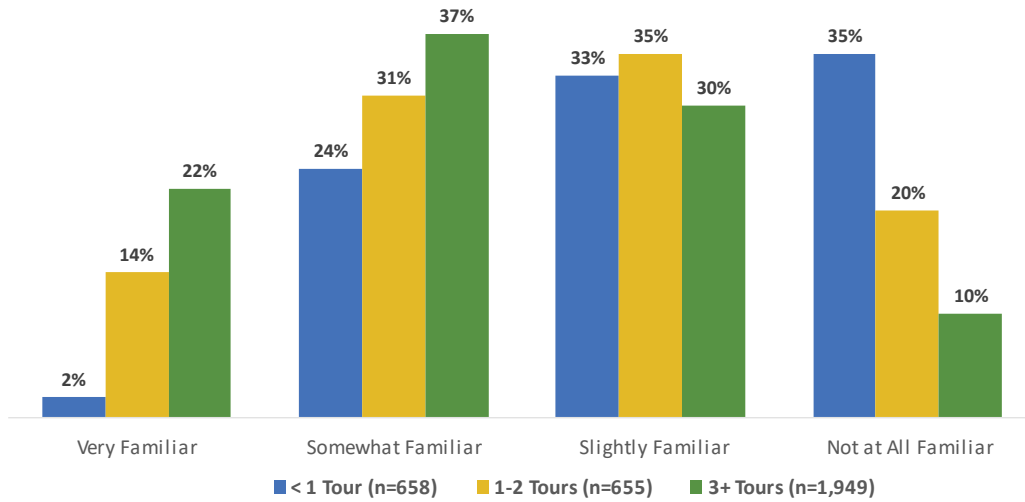
The level of familiarity is relatively low, given GCLO serves the entire Community. The population served by GCLO includes significant annual turnover. One in five respondents to the survey (20 percent) have not yet completed a full overseas diplomatic assignment. Half of these newcomers are from the State Department (48 percent), and more than one in five are from the Department of Defense (22 percent).

A key aspect of this turnover is that newcomers are not familiar with GCLO. Moreover, many do not become familiar with GCLO until completing several overseas tours. GCLO will work with partners at the Foreign Service Institute to find ways for A-100 participants to be briefed by GCLO.

GCLO Familiarity

Q: How familiar are you with GCLO, the Global Community Liaison Office, formerly known as FLO, the Family Liaison Office, based in Washington, DC?

By Overseas Diplomatic Tours



GCLO MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMS, SERVICES, RESOURCES, AND OUTREACH

Usage: One GCLO offering is used by almost everyone surveyed, CLO at Post (by 92 percent).

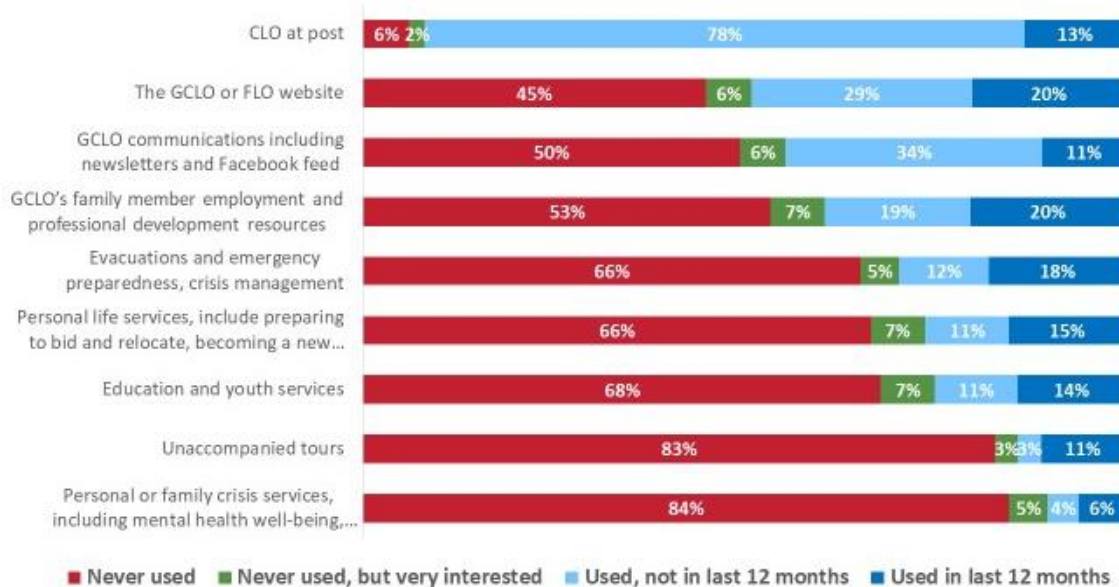
Three offerings are used by 40 to 50 percent of the Community: GCLO website (49 percent), GCLO communications, including their newsletter and social media (44 percent), and Family Member Employment (40 percent).

Otherwise, segments of the Community have used the other GCLO programs and services:

- Evacuations and emergency preparedness, crisis management (30 percent)
- Personal life services, include preparing to bid and relocate, becoming a new parent, adding a person to orders, and caring for parents (26 percent)
- Education and youth services (25 percent)
- Unaccompanied Tours (10 percent)
- Personal or family crisis services, including mental health well-being, separation, divorce, domestic violence and abuse, and caring for parents with failing health (10 percent)

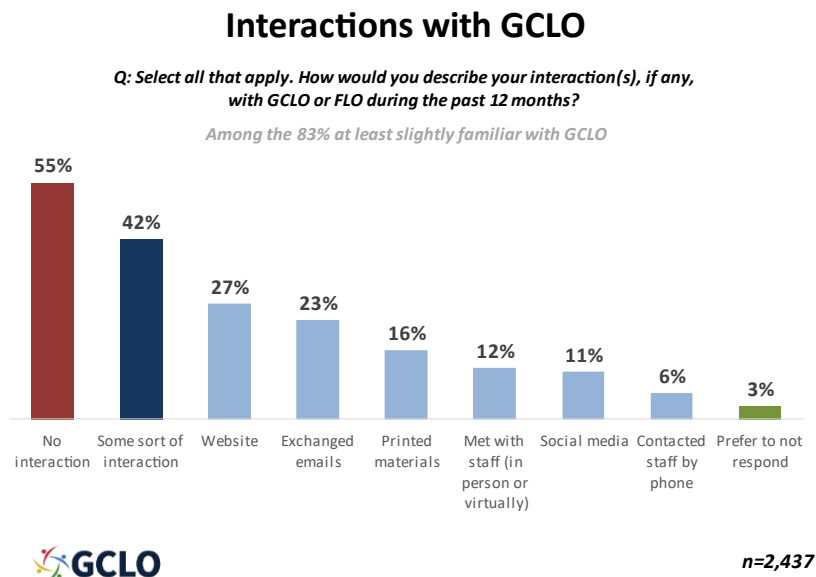
GCLO Programs, Services and Resources

Q: Please indicate which ones you have used, if ever.



INTERACTIONS WITH GCLO

In the 12 months, 42% of the Community who were at least slightly familiar with GCLO had an interaction (defined in the chart below) with GCLO. More than one in four (27 percent) said they used the GCLO website. Almost one in four (23 percent) reported exchanging emails with GCLO.



BIDDING FACTORS

Bidding factors provides some insight into what is important to a community, overall and for segments, in navigating life while on an international assignment.

Two factors were among the highest priority (based on more than 20 percent saying it is *extremely important*) across *all* of the major household-defined segments of the community:

- Safety and security
- Ability to have your pets at post

Child-related issues was a clear top bidding factor for households with children, and it was not an important factor for any other group.

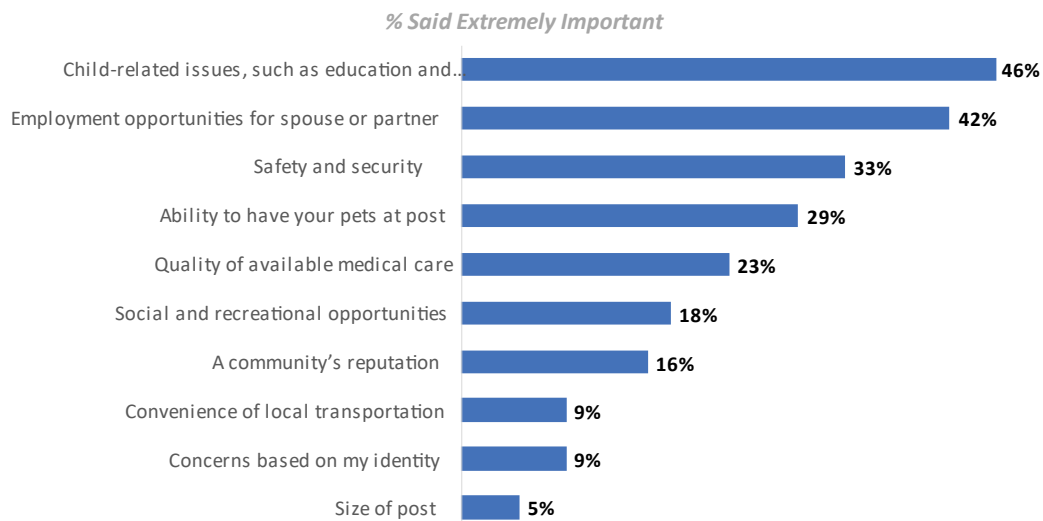
Family member employment was important for all household groups except singles, and it was a clear top concern for couples without children (56 percent of households with couples, no children and established, 50 percent amount newer households with couples and no children and 45 percent for households with children).

Notably, having **pets** was *extremely important* to a high percentage of newer couples without children (45 percent, and nearly a top factor) and with the established couples without children (32 percent, the second most noted factor).

Medical care was an important bidding factor for households with children (27 percent) and for newer couples without children (25 percent). **Social and recreational opportunities** were an *extremely important* bidding factor for one in four singles and one in five newer couples (22 percent).

Bidding Factors

Q: From when you most recently bid on an assignment or were preparing to move to a new country (if you did not bid), please rate how important each of these was in your decisions. Was this...



VOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS DURING OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS

A small group, approximately 3 percent of respondents, are voluntarily separated from their partner, on an Unaccompanied Tour, living in a country different from the Direct Hire's assignment. No dominant factor is driving these situations.

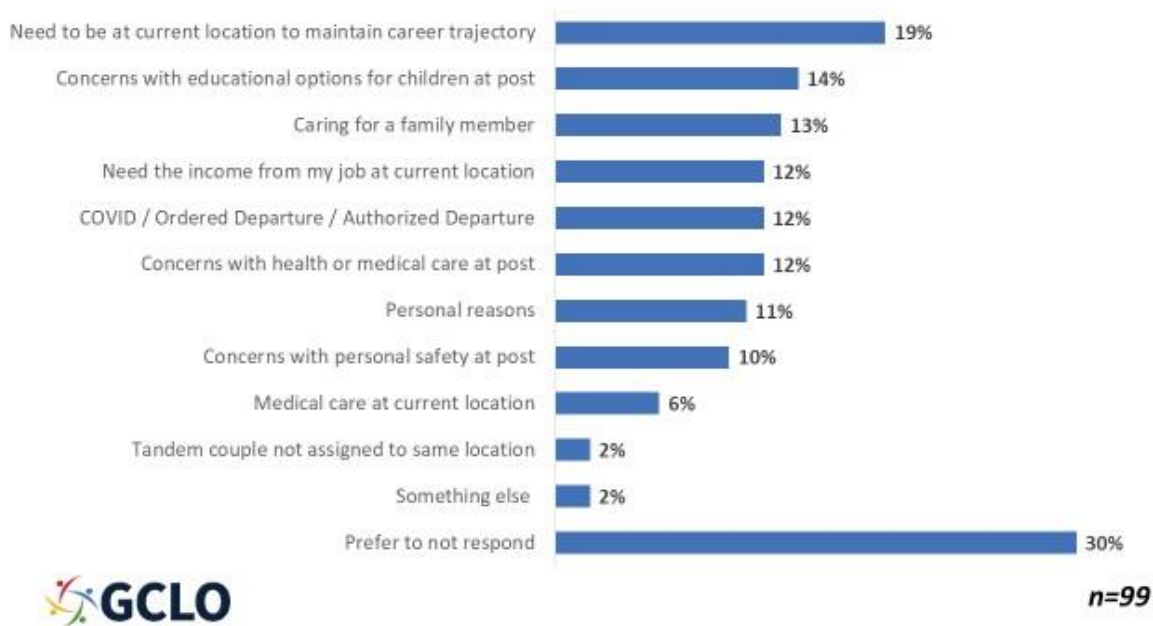
From the small group, we have a general sense that a slightly leading factor, for more than three in ten of this separated group, is **career** (19 percent, to maintain career trajectory) and **income** (12 percent, needing the income). Other factors, similar in size, are **education for children** (14 percent), **caring for a family member** (13 percent), concerns with **medical care at post** (12 percent), and concerns with **personal safety at post** (12%).

Interestingly, three in ten members of this group preferred to not respond to the question.

Reasons for Voluntary Separations

Q: Which of the following best describe the reasons you are not at post together?

Among voluntarily separated couples



PROGRAMS, SERVICES, RESOURCES, AND OUTREACH

EDUCATION & YOUTH

The universe of households that might work with GCLO Education and Youth, those with children under 21 who have not yet completed high school or completed high school in the past 12 months, is 52 percent. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the Community is a household with children who have engaged with GCLO and 23% have children and have not engaged.

- (1) The universe of the Community interacting with GCLO on this topic is 30 percent.
- (2) It is unclear what percentage of the additional 22 percent of the Community with kids might be targets for GCLO Education and Youth. For example, some might only have infants and toddlers.

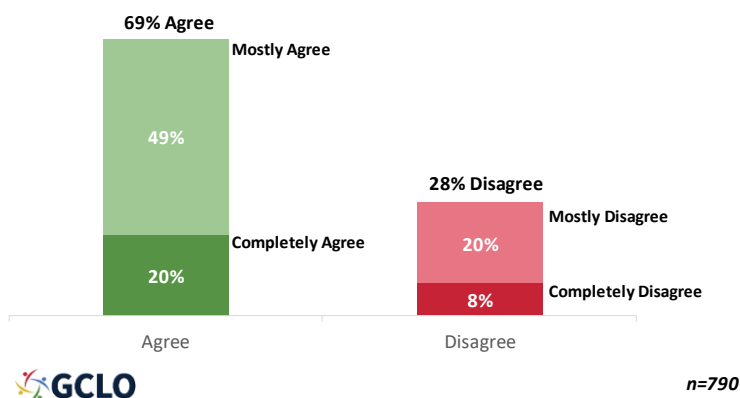
Well-Informed on Educational Opportunities:

Among members of the Community who have personal experience with GCLO on Education and Youth issues, seven in ten agree they feel well-informed of educational options.

Metric: Informed on Educational Opportunities

Q: Consider this statement: I feel well -informed of the educational options for my children. Do you...

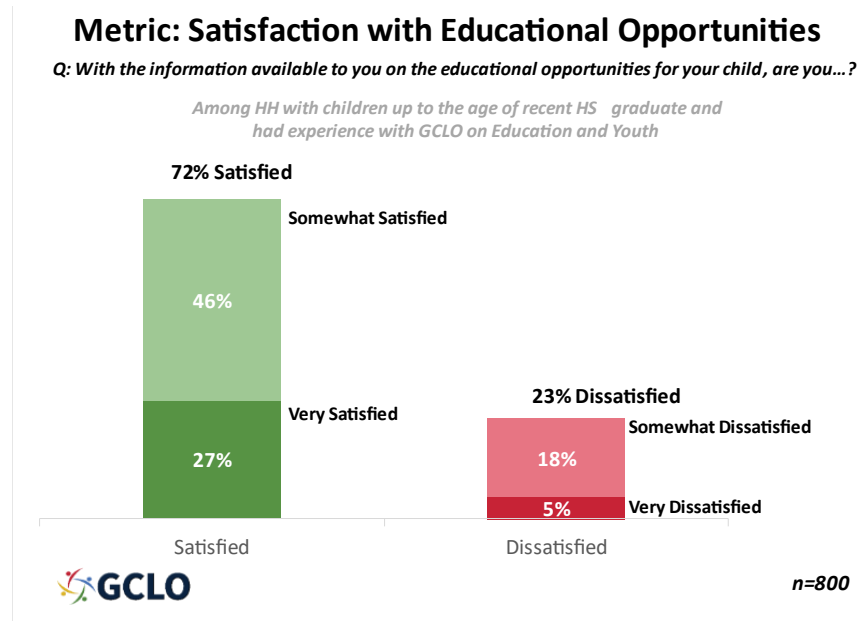
Among HH with children up to the age of recent HS graduate and had experience with GCLO on Education and Youth



In general, when members of the Community feel strongly about being informed (i.e., *completely agree*) a majority are likely to view GCLO favorably. Among those who feel less strong about being informed, *mostly agree*, half (49 percent) are more likely to recommend GCLO services.

Satisfaction with Educational Opportunities:

More than seven in ten members of the Community who have worked with GCLO on Education and Youth issues are satisfied with the educational opportunities for their child; more than one in four are *very satisfied* (27 percent).



Priority areas: No individual youth education area emerges as a leading need among parents.

The youth educational needs of the Community are fragmented. Some of this can be attributed to different needs for different ages of children, in addition to parents pursuing different learning environments for their children – such as traditional in-person local schooling, the emergence of online schooling and remote online schools, as well as special needs, home schooling and boarding schools.

More than half said efforts to keep pace with changing educational needs of our children, which covers the spectrum of learning environments, was important to 56 percent of these parents.

UNACCOMPANIED TOURS (UT)

Members of the community who have used GCLO Unaccompanied Tours programs and services at one time, were more likely to recommend GCLO (overall) than those who have not; more than half of those who have used GCLO for Unaccompanied Tours had a favorable opinion.

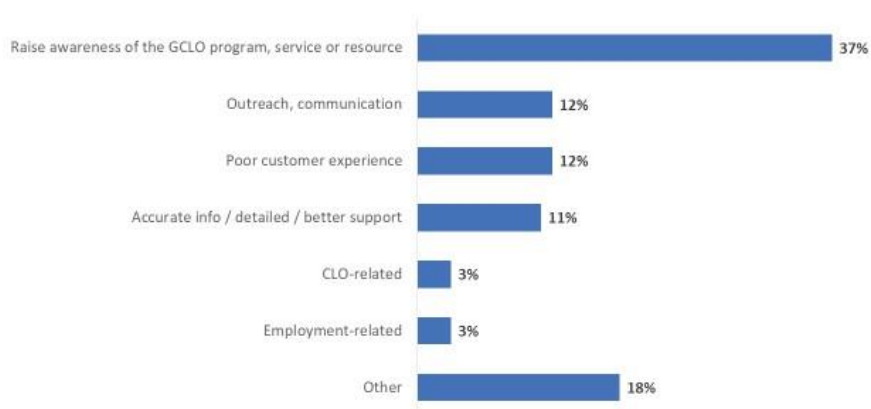
Improvements for Unaccompanied Tours:

The most important area for improvement is in communications and outreach. A plurality of those providing feedback via open-ended responses, 37 percent, said the most important area to change would be to raise awareness of the offering.

Improvements for Unaccompanied Tours

Q: What changes should GCLO consider making in helping with Unaccompanied Tours for you to give it a higher ranking? What else?

*Among Participants in an Unaccompanied Tour in Past 12 Months
Who Rated GCLO Between Zero and Six (Open-End)*



n=76

Priority areas: In the current environment, with the ever-increasing experience of Foreign Service agencies supporting Unaccompanied diplomatic missions, none of the current GCLO offerings were viewed as important by more than one-third of the Community. Among those who rated each offering as important, 57 percent to 66 percent rated each program, service or resource as satisfactory.

If seeking areas to improve, narrowing the scales of the analysis of importance and performance exposes two objectives: resources to provide referrals various agencies, and information on how to prepare for a tour.

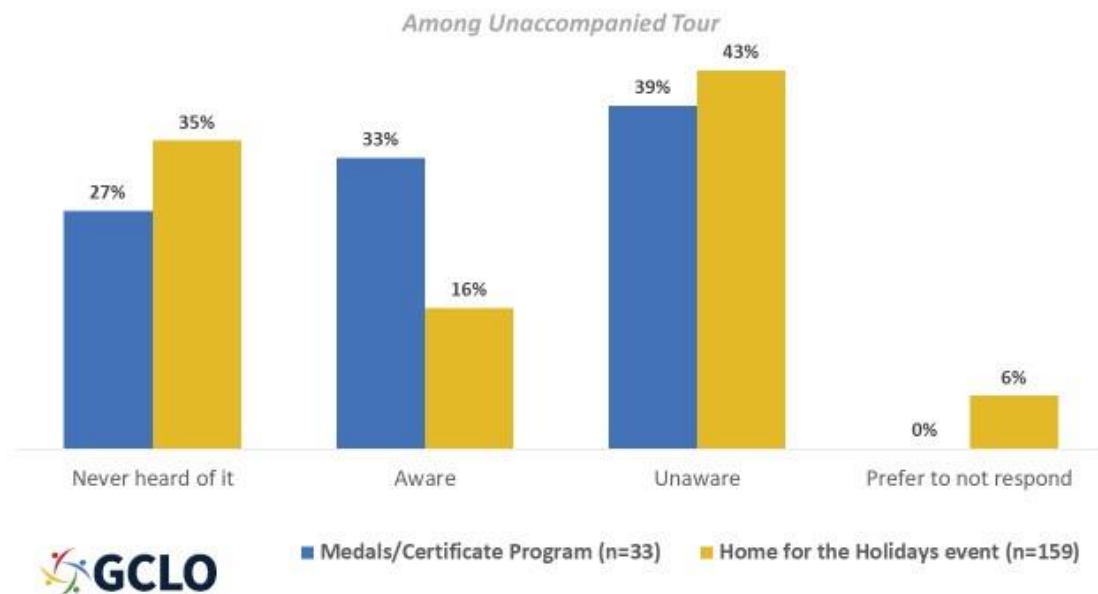
Required Paperwork for Recognition Programs:

Among members of the Community involved in an Unaccompanied Tour in the past 12 months, one in three were aware of the requirement to submit paperwork (to opt in) to be involved in the Medal and Certificate of Recognition program (available only to families affiliated with the five traditional foreign affairs agencies), and 16 percent (from all agencies) were aware of this for the Diplomacy at Home for the Holidays program.

Awareness of Required Paperwork for Recognition Programs

Q: IF HAVE CHILDREN UNDER 21 AND FROM THE FIVE ELIGIBLE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGENCIES: Were you aware that parents must submit a nomination form in order to receive a Medal and Certificate of Recognition?

Q: Were you aware that a Direct Hire must submit an Unaccompanied Tour Contact Form in order to receive UT information AND to receive an invitation to the annual Diplomacy at Home for the Holidays party?



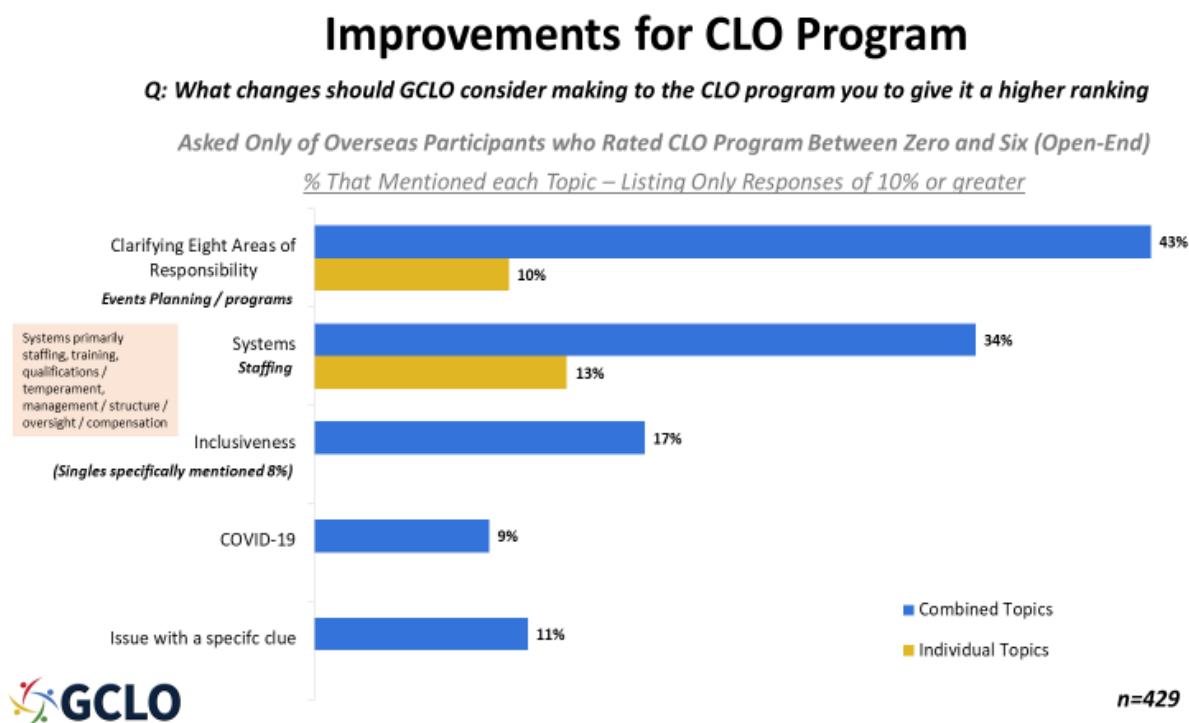
CLO AT POST

Improvements for CLO Program:

Nearly one in five comments, 17 percent, mentioned a need for inclusiveness, primarily for singles and people without children, but also, to a much lesser degree, from different agencies, neighborhoods at post, work status and other segments.

The most commented-upon concern was about staffing, primarily aimed at gaps in having the CLO roles filled (13 percent).

Nearly one in ten (nine percent) commented in a sympathetic tone about the impact of COVID-19, how it has hindered the ability to have community events and led to gaps in coverage and training, with hopes the CLO program will get people re-connected soon.



Priority areas: From the perspective of Community members who are based at foreign posts, most rated the areas of CLO responsibility as important, and with a satisfactory level of performance.

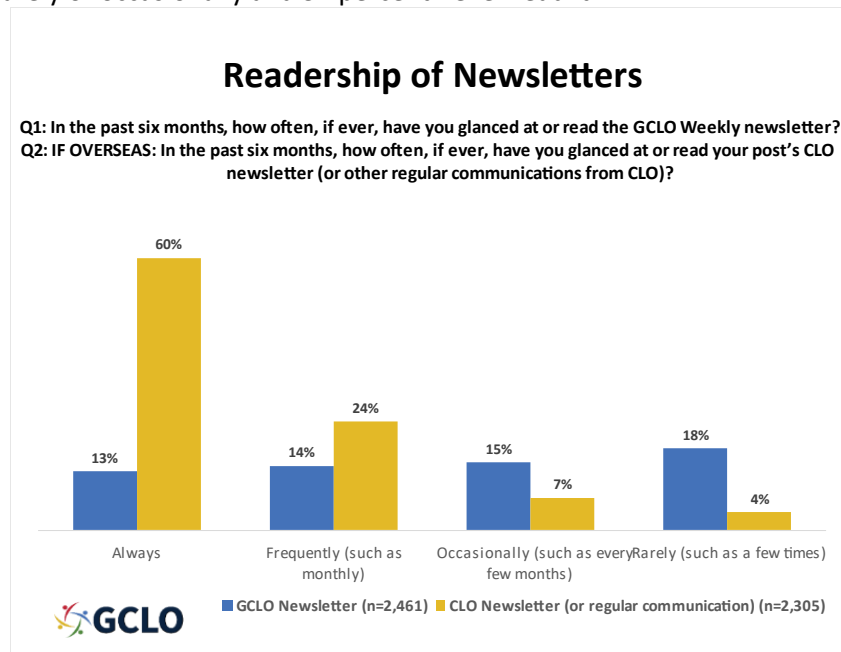
COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Key Metrics: Healthy majorities of members of the Community agreed communications are relevant, accessible, clear, and reaching them.



GCLO Weekly:

One in four Community members (27 percent) report they always or frequently read GCLO Weekly, one in three read it rarely or occasionally and 37 percent never read it.



Channels:

For information about Foreign Service life, two in three like to receive this through email (64 percent), though most use multiple sources, as few (8 percent) listed e-mail as their *only* preferred source.

For information at post, nine in ten preferred email (89 percent), with sizable minorities also preferring WhatsApp (37 percent), private Facebook groups (35 percent) and websites (29 percent).

-END-